



# STATE OF IOWA

CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR  
PATTY JUDGE, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
KEVIN W. CONCANNON, DIRECTOR

May 1, 2008

Kevin Concannon has presided over the Iowa Department of Human Services since the spring of 2003. During that time there were these accomplishments, in no particular order.

- **Creation of the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise.** Prior to the launch of the IME in 2005, Medicaid administration was handled by one enormous contract – in excess of \$20 million a year, at the time the state’s largest – which involved so many separate chores that only two or three companies nationwide could compete. None of those providers were anywhere near Iowa. The IME separates the administration function into ten separate specialties and requires competitive bids for each. All of the contractors are now housed under one roof in Des Moines. This process, and the proximity to Iowa Medicaid administrators, makes this program far more efficient and responsive.
- **Creation of IowaCare.** Iowa faced a severe blow to Medicaid funding (a cut of at least 9 percent) when the federal government announced it would no longer honor a matching system that Iowa and about 15 other states were using prior to 2005. The solution was to win Medicaid matches for previously unmatched state funds. A key innovation was to match property tax dollars collected for a public hospital in Des Moines. The new charity care program, IowaCare, is a Medicaid expansion program that provides modest medical coverage for people who are ineligible for Medicaid.
- **Redesign of the child welfare system.** Iowa’s method of keeping vulnerable children safe has been changed from top to bottom. New centralized intake units eliminate regional disparities, a new structure places heavy emphasis on the highest-risk cases, and special attention has been devoted to reducing racial disparities. These and other improvements – along with an especially-strong partnership with Iowa juvenile courts – have driven significant improvement on federal benchmarks in areas such as child safety, quick reunification when it’s safe to do so, prevention of “bounce back” into foster care, prevention of multiple placements, and timely adoption when reunification is not possible.
  - Caseloads for DHS workers have been reduced from 50 to 30. While the ratio is still too high, Iowa DHS professionals now have much more contact with at-risk families than in years past.
- **Re-creation of Division of Mental Health and Disability Services.** The division, which had been eliminated for budget reasons in 2002, has already launched an anti-stigma campaign and this year achieved legislative approval of a new mental health crisis response system to begin in January 2009. This was the top DHS legislative proposal this year. In addition, a legislative change means that parents of Medicaid-eligible services no longer need to relinquish custody before receiving mental health help for their children.
- **Improved access and rapid expansion of food stamps.** The number of people receiving this benefit, and the number of federal dollars they spend, has doubled under Director

Concannon's leadership. By increasing participation, people with limited resources get more access to food. A secondary benefit is a direct boost for the retail grocer economy and an indirect boost for farmers. Food stamp benefits are 100 percent federal dollars. About 253,000 Iowans (a record) now receive food stamps, and they spend about \$25 million federal dollars a month in Iowa grocery stores. It is estimated that Iowa now reaches at least 60 percent of eligible people, ranking the state near the middle of the pack nationwide.

- The Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA recognized Iowa as the nation's leader in improving access to food stamps in 2007.
- **Reducing barriers to government services, making them more efficient.**
  - By eliminating hassle factors and introducing electronically-delivered benefits instead of fraud-prone coupons, Iowa has become much more customer-friendly in administration of food stamps. Outreach efforts, including a farmer's market initiative, have pushed food stamp participation to record levels.
  - An on-line application system for Iowa's children health insurance program, *hawk-i*, was established, and soon there will be one online app for four more major programs, including food stamps, welfare, Medicaid, and childcare assistance.
  - Set to open late this summer will be an expanded call center (located in Council Bluffs) that will service calls from income maintenance customers.
- **Opened joint offices for collection of child support.** Iowa's Child Support Recovery Unit, routinely ranked in the top six nationwide for efficiency in collecting child support for custodial parents, remains the only unit of its kind to have a joint office with another state. Joint offices in Illinois and Nebraska reduce time lags on cases that span state boundaries.
  - The CSRU collects more than \$320 million a year for custodial parents.
- **Created a childcare Quality Rating System.** This voluntary program challenges operators of childcare businesses, both the smaller in-home businesses as well as the larger licensed centers, to meet rigorous standards. Vendors that meet quality standards may display their success on a rising scale up to five stars. The QRS program has grown from 64 registered homes and 33 registered childcare centers in 2006 to 458 registered homes and 195 registered childcare centers in 2007.
- **Creation of the Preparation for Adult Living program.** Prior to this innovation, aged-out foster kids were basically on their own after age 18. PAL provides a living stipend for any aged-out foster youth who has a job or is going to school, or a combination of the two. Importantly, it also provides Medicaid coverage until the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, an important benefit especially for youth with mental health challenges.
- **Improving dignity for people with mental retardation or mental illness.**
  - After bringing similar actions in dozens of other states, the U.S. Department of Justice began intense scrutiny of civil rights for people with mental retardation

living at Iowa's two resource centers, in Woodward and Glenwood. Kevin signed a settlement that commits Iowa to a better balance of medical and behavioral care.

- In early 2007, Iowa won a massive -- \$50 million—federal “Money Follows the Person” grant that will help people who are living in institutions, either state or private, on a voluntary basis, to move home or closer to home.
- Last year Iowa was the first, and is still the only, state in the nation to win federal approval of a program offering life skills for people with disabilities, especially chronic mental illness. About 3,000 people are expected to participate.

For more information

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